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GREEK IN THE HIGH SCHOOLS

Since students in our High Schools who are minded to study Greek have to meet opposition from various quarters—their fellow-students, teachers of other subjects, their parents, kinsmen, friends, and mere chance acquaintances—a word or two as to ways of strengthening them in their purpose may be of service.

To every High School student who thinks of studying Greek, teacher or friend might well put this question—'In trying to reach a decision whether you shall or shall not study Greek, whose advice shall you heed? Shall you take the advice of those who, however much they are seeking or think they are seeking your interests, know nothing at all of Greek, because they have never studied it, or, if they did study it, have not profited by its study, or shall you listen rather to those who have studied Greek, who know it, who love it, who have found in it comfort, help, strength, who know, from years of experience, that they are better men and better women because they have given of their time and of their minds and souls to Greek? In a word, shall you follow the guidance of the inexperienced and the inexpert in Greek, or shall you here, as you do in all other affairs of practical life, trust only the expert'.

Again, teacher or friend might say, "If some one tells you, 'Oh, I studied Greek, but I am sorry I did it, because I got nothing out of it', shall you not ask him or her one or two questions? Shall you not say to him or to her, 'What did you *put into* the study of Greek? How much of yourself went into the study of Greek? In trying to get the wealth that is in Greek, did you remember the true saying that to bring back from India its wealth one must take that wealth to India with him when he goes thither?' Shall you not also say to him or to her, 'How do you know you got nothing from the study of Greek?'. It would be well to tell to the student the case of Ben Hur, as pictured by Lew Wallace. When Ben Hur was a galley slave, he saw in his daily experiences nothing but misery, nothing but the negation of all the hopes of his life. But later, when, in the chariot race, the Roman leaned over and cut with his cruel lash the Arab steeds of Ben Hur, then—just because he had been a galley slave—Ben Hur could keep his footing on the madly swaying car, and had the strength of hand, fingers, and wrist needed to control his frightened steeds, subjected for the first time in their lives to cruelty.

What will the expert tell the pupil who is minded to study Greek? He will tell the pupil that Greek is in itself a beautiful and wonderful language, and that, in

this beautiful and wonderful language, there is to be found the greatest literature the world has ever known. Into that literature in the three years of a High School course in Greek the student can make much progress: in that time he can get a knowledge of Homer, the earliest and the greatest poet of our Western civilization. He can read something of Xenophon's story of the retreat of the Ten Thousand, a retreat that paved the way for one of the most important events in the history of the world—the conquests of Alexander the Great—by showing that into the great, mysterious Persian Empire, which the Greeks had thought unconquerable, it was possible for Greeks, in small numbers, to make their hostile way, safely. And then, if the student enters College, he can go on to the wonderful dialogues of Plato, and the great productions of Greek tragedy, Greek comedy, Greek oratory, Greek history.

All this makes the study of Greek in itself, if it led to nothing else, well worth while, for the student would have, in his own mind and heart, inseparable from himself, and therefore never to be lost, while intellectual life endures, high thoughts of lofty minds, to be his unfailing comrades, whatever life might bring on the material side. Such a pupil could say of his Greek books and the ideas that had come to him through them, what the poet Southey said of his books:

My never-failing friends are they
With whom I converse day by day.

But the study of Greek means far more than this. It affords a means that nothing else offers, or at least offers so well, of understanding all the later intellectual history of mankind. The Greeks profoundly influenced the intellectual and the aesthetic life of the Romans; to the Romans they brought, as they have to the world ever since, an understanding of beauty, in language, in literature, in architecture, in sculpture. Even to-day, in the domain of beauty, the world looks to Greece for instruction and for models. When Germany, at the end of the eighteenth century, began at last carefully to study Greek, the intellectual life, the real intellectual life, of Germany began; through their study of Greek and through nothing else the Germans became, during the nineteenth century, the intellectual leaders of the world, and through that study they gained the inspiration which enabled them, for the first time, to develop a German literature. So much life is there still in the language and the thoughts of the Greeks of many centuries ago—in a so called 'dead language'.

The study of Greek, the language and the literature, helps us as nothing else does or can to an understanding

of our own language and our own literature. This is, of course, a familiar point, and I shall not dwell on it here. I shall merely reprint here, in modified form, a paragraph which may help to bring home, forcefully, the large rôle played in our every-day life—of work and pleasure—by words of Greek and Latin origin (some interesting results might be obtained by setting this paragraph for analysis and comment before two groups of pupils—one that had studied Greek and Latin faithfully, and one that had not):

Many of us go to School or to College or to the University. We study there arithmetic, geography, physics, physical geography, geology, biology, grammar, science, literature, poetry, etc. For recreation, we go to the theater and witness the drama, played by actors, and often enjoy the dialogue, or we go to the 'movies', remembering, doubtless, that the movies depend on photography. Sometimes we go to the opera, and enjoy the music, rendered by an orchestra or by a chorus. In business we use the telephone and the telegraph or the dictaphone; at home we have phonographs. When we are dying, the last things we have to do with are a doctor and medicine; when men are dead, they are laid away in a cemetery, or are cremated.

Lastly, not only does the study of Greek help us to a Life, that is to a life enriched by contact with the thoughts of great minds greatly expressed in a great language, but it helps us to a living. In plain English, the study of Greek is a distinctly practical thing, in the narrowest sense of the word practical. One power every individual needs—the power of self-expression in language. The more he has in his mind in the way of important thoughts, the more he needs the power of putting into language those thoughts. Nothing will aid so much to a practical mastery of English for practical purposes, and for the higher purposes of the higher intellectual life as the study of Greek; nothing will even approach the value of Greek here, save the value of the study of Latin. Here, again, it is wiser to trust the declarations of those who know, because they have studied Latin and Greek, and have profited by the study, than the say-so of those who know not Greek.

To sum up, the study of Greek, begun in the High School, and carried on into College, will afford fine delights and substantial aid in practical life; it will contribute both to a living and to a Life. Even if the study of Greek is not carried beyond the High School, its study there will pay, in both the fields differentiated above—a living and a Life.

C. K.

THE ITALIC LANGUAGES

The early Romans were surrounded by neighbors whom they regarded as foreigners, and who certainly differed from the Romans in language. Whether they differed also in race is a question of more difficulty and, in a way, of less importance¹, for national spirit readily

disregards differences in race, while a single race is often divided between several nations, especially if the several nations speak different languages. The most important of these foreign-speaking neighbors were the Greek colonists scattered along the coast to the Southeast, the Etruscans just across the Tiber to the West and the North, and a large number of peoples in the interior of the peninsula who spoke languages closely related to Latin itself.

The languages of this latter group, including Latin, are known as the Italic languages. In the fourth and the third centuries B.C., they occupied most of central Italy. Oscan was spoken in Samnium, Campania, Northern Apulia, Lucania, Bruttium, and, for a while, in the Sicilian city of Messana. North and Northwest of the Oscan terrain and Southeast, East, and Northeast of Rome were spoken Paelignian, Marrucinian, Vestinian, Volscian, Marsian, Aequian, Sabine, and some other dialects. In the immediate vicinity of Rome were spoken Praenestine, Lanuvian, and other dialects of the Latini, while a few miles to the North of the city, surrounded by Etruscan territory, was the dialect of Falerii which we call Faliscan. The northernmost member of the group was Umbrian, the language of Umbria.

That the Italic languages belong to the Indo-European family has been clear ever since the existence of that family was first recognized; but their precise position among Indo-European tongues has been the subject of controversy. It was long supposed that Greek was the nearest relative of Latin. Two causes led to this view. In the first place, Greek and Latin had long been coupled in men's thoughts as the classical languages. The feeling that they naturally belonged together was reinforced by the observation that in many respects the Graeco-Roman world had a homogeneous civilization, and, in particular, that Latin literature is, in large part, a continuation of Greek literature. In the second place, there is no doubt that Greek is more similar to Latin than is any other known language. The former consideration of course has no real bearing upon the question, and we can now see that the similarity between the two languages is not of a sort to argue a peculiarly close relationship.

One reason why Greek and Latin stand alone as representatives of their type is that we have no extensive remains of other related languages at the same stage of development. If we had, for example, Germanic documents from the second century B.C., they might appear almost as much like Latin as Greek does. At that date we should probably find *o* and *ā* occurring in Germanic in about the same places as in Latin and Greek, and the vowels and the consonants of final syllables would still remain much as they had been in Indo-European. The Germanic word for 'water' would probably be declined in the singular *ahwā*, *ahwās*, *ahwāi*, *ahwām*, while Latin has in the corresponding cases *aqua*, *aquae*, *aquae*, *aquam*. The Germanic word for 'when' would be *hwom*, the equivalent of Latin *quom*.

¹I must add that the terms 'Indo-European' and 'Italic' are linguistic terms. They do not properly refer to any race whatever, and the use of them by ethnologists can only darken counsel.